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Vorwort

Kaum eine andere Thematik hat in den letzten Jahren und Jahrzehnten für die Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften so viele innovative Ansätze geliefert wie die Gender-Forschung, die heute im Sinne der Intersektionalitätsforschung auch verschiedene Diskriminierungsformen wie Rassismus, Sexismus oder Klassenzugehörigkeit in den Blick nimmt. Fragen der stereotypen oder allegorischen Darstellung, der sprachlichen, medialen und literarischen Konstruktion von Geschlechtskategorien sind insbesondere durch feministische Ansätze in das Zentrum der kulturwissenschaftlichen Diskussionen gerückt. Deutlich wird in den Gender-Studien darüber hinaus, dass geschlechtliche Identität in vielen Fällen ein soziales Konstrukt darstellt, das nicht zuletzt auf sprachlich sowie kulturell vermittelten Konzepten beruht. Durch diesen Zusammenhang ergeben sich zahlreiche Schnittpunkte mit dem Bereich der Metaphorik und Metonymie, deren Erforschung und Beschreibung Kernziel von *metaphorik.de* ist: Worin liegen die metaphorischen Dimensionen genderbezogener Identitätskonstruktionen? Gibt es so etwas wie eine spezifische Metaphorik zur Beschreibung geschlechtlicher Stereotypen? Gibt es sogar einen genderspezifischen Metapherngebrauch? Dies waren u.a. Leitfragen des Call for Papers, der diesem Band vorausging.

Der nun vorliegende Themenband von *metaphorik.de* versammelt verschiedene Beiträge, die nach dem thematischen Aufruf eingegangen sind. Wir sind sehr erfreut über die gute Resonanz, die andeutet, dass die Thematik offensichtlich eine hohe Relevanz besitzt. Der Band beginnt mit Marina Bletsas' Beitrag, der zeigt, dass die sprichwörtlich *sprichwörtliche* Konstruktion von Weiblichkeit in französischen und italienischen Phraseologismen auf langwährenden kulturellen Überzeugungen beruht. Francesca Capacchietti untersucht auf der Basis eines französischsprachigen Korpus die Frage, in welchem Rahmen weibliche Influencerinnen in der Darstellung sportlicher Aktivitäten eine spezifische Metaphorik nutzen. Welche Eigenschaften werden hier metaphorisch mit Weiblichkeit assoziiert? Jennifer Henke betrachtet japanische Comic- bzw. Manga-Adaptationen einzelner Shakespeare-Dramen und analysiert die grafischen Visualisierungen genderbezogener Metaphern. Deutlich wird hier das Potenzial umfassender semiotischer Studien, die Sprache, Sprachbilder und Verbildlichungen miteinander in Bezug setzen. Suneeta Mishra wirft in ihrer Studie zum politischen Diskurs Indiens die Frage nach dem Verhältnis

zwischen grammatikalischem Genus im Hindi und der metaphorisch gestützten Gender-Identität auf. In welchem Maße bedingt das grammatische Genus eines als Bildspender eingesetzten Substantivs sein Potenzial zur Projektion auf personenbasierte Bildempfänger? Annegret Richter geht schließlich in ihrem literaturwissenschaftlichen Beitrag entlang eines Werkes der franko-algerischen Literatur der metaphorischen Konstruktion von Geschlechtlichkeit in Verbindung mit Raewyn Connells Konzept der hegemonialen Männlichkeit nach. Die hier veröffentlichten Studien zeugen von der Diversität, Aktualität und Relevanz der Fragestellungen im Zusammenspiel von Metaphorik und Gender.

In einer weiteren außerhalb des Themenschwerpunktes angesiedelten Studie untersucht Hanna Bruns metaphorischen Sprachgebrauch in internen Diskussionen der rechtspopulistischen Alternative für Deutschland. Dabei geht sie der Frage nach, in welchem Rahmen hier metaphorische Konzepte aktiviert werden, die bereits im Nationalsozialismus beliebt waren.

Wir hoffen auf ein vielfältiges Interesse an diesem Schwerpunktband und sind überzeugt, dass die vorliegenden Analysen Anregungen für weitere Forschungen bieten. Bedanken möchten wir uns für die Erstellung der Layout-Vorlagen bei Marisa Sieberg (Essen) und vor allem Kerstin Sterkel (Saarbrücken). Dem Wehrhahn-Verlag gebührt Dank für die Erstellung der gedruckten Ausgabe und Bernd Backhaus (Bochum) für die technische Unterstützung der online-Version.

Bochum, Bremen, Essen, Flensburg, Halle, Hamburg und Saarbrücken im Juli 2020

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Preface

You would be hard-pressed to find a field in recent years and decades that has provided humanities and social sciences with more innovative approaches than gender studies. Modern gender studies take an intersectional approach and also scrutinise many other forms of discrimination, such as racism, sexism or classism. Largely because of feminist approaches, cultural sciences have come to focus on questions about stereotypical or allegorical representations as well as about linguistic, medial and literary construction of gender categories. Furthermore, gender studies have brought to light that gender identity is in many cases a social construct that is in no small part based on linguistically and culturally transmitted concepts. Inherent to this connection are numerous overlaps with the field of metaphor and metonymy – the research and description of which is the main objective of *metaphorik.de*. What are the metaphorical dimensions of gender-based identity constructs? Is there something like a specific realm of metaphor used to describe gender stereotypes? Might there even be a gender-specific use of metaphor? These were the central questions posed in the call for papers preceding this issue.

The *metaphorik.de* issue you are reading is dedicated to the topic of gender and compiles various articles submitted after our call for papers. We are very pleased at the many submissions, which are a sign of how relevant this topic must be. This issue's first article is written by Marina Bletsas, who shows that the *metaphorical* construction of femininity in French and Italian phraseologies literally builds on deep-rooted cultural beliefs. Using a French corpus, Francesca Capacchietti then discusses to which extent female influencers use specific metaphors when representing athletic activities. Which traits are being metaphorically associated with femininity? Jennifer Henke looks at Japanese comic and manga adaptations of a number of Shakespeare plays and analyses how gender-related metaphors are visualised in the images. Her study clearly demonstrates the untapped potential of comprehensive semiotics research that ties together language, metaphor and their representation in images. Suneeta Mishra follows with a study of the political discourse in India, in which she investigates the relationship between grammatical gender in Hindi and gender identity, which is reinforced by metaphor. How far does the grammatical gender of the source noun condition its potential to be projected onto a human target? Finally, Annegret Richter's article has a literary topic. She studies the

metaphorical construction of gender in connection with Raewyn Connells' concept of hegemonic masculinity in a French-Algerian work of literature. The studies published in this issue are testament to the diversity, topicality and relevance of research questions at the interface of metaphor and gender.

In a further study outside the thematic focus, Hanna Bruns examines the metaphorical use of language in internal discussions of the right-wing populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany). In doing so, she examines the question of the extent to which metaphorical concepts that were already popular under National Socialism are activated here.

We hope that many will find this special issue interesting and are convinced that the analyses it contains will spark much further research. We would like to thank Marisa Sieberg (Essen) and Kerstin Sterkel (Saarbrücken), in particular, for designing the layout templates. Our thanks to the Wehrhahn-Verlag for the print issue and to Bernd Backhaus (Bochum) for his technical support with the online version.

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Gendered Metaphors in Proverbs. A study on Italian and French

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Abstract

In this contribution, I aim at reconstructing and categorizing the recurrent gendered metaphors for WOMAN in Italian and French proverbs against the backdrop of Cognitive Metaphor Theory (CMT). After focusing on the particular interplay of metaphors and the paremiological text genre, chosen as a means of gaining insight into diachronically long-standing cultural beliefs, I propose the use of a bottom-up method to address cultural conceptual metaphors about WOMAN. Finally, I address analogies and differences in the metaphorical patterns involved in the construction of gender in Italian and French proverbs.

Der Beitrag will in italienischen und französischen Sprichwörtern rekurrierende Metaphern für das Konzept FRAU vor dem Hintergrund der kognitiven Metapherntheorie analysieren. Die parämiologische Textsorte gilt als privilegierte Brille, um Einsichten in diachron langwährende kulturelle Überzeugungen zu gewinnen. Der Fokus wird zunächst auf das Verhältnis von Metapher und Sprichwort gelegt, bevor die Rekonstruktion und Kategorisierung kultureller konzeptueller Metaphern für Frauen *bottom-up* angegangen wird. Analogien und Unterschiede metaphorischer Muster, die in italienischen und französischen Sprichwörtern zur *gender*-Konstruktion beitragen, werden schließlich aus kontrastiver Perspektive beleuchtet.

1. Introduction

This paper deals with the metaphorical conceptualization of the female gender in Italian and French proverbs. In other words, I ask what conceptual metaphors emerge from the linguistic material constituted by Italian and French proverbs on women, i.e. what source domain or domains are used to reason about women in the proverbs of these two Romance languages. The perspective is thus onomasiological at first, in that it takes the concept WOMAN as a starting point to look for the linguistic expressions suggesting a metaphorical construction of the concept. It then becomes semasiological, as we turn to modelling the abstract conceptual metaphors behind their linguistic vestments.

Drawing on Cognitive¹ Metaphor Theory (see Lakoff/Johnson 2003 [1980]), I distinguish between metaphorical expressions, to be found on the linguistic surface, and conceptual metaphors, defined as the use of “inference patterns from one conceptual domain to reason about another conceptual domain” (Lakoff/Johnson 2003: 246). This linking between the two conceptual domains, source and target domain respectively, gives rise to metaphorical mappings, i.e. to systematic cross-domain correspondences (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 2003: 246) that permeate and inform our thoughts and speech.

As a cognitive instrument, metaphor is thus universal. This does not mean that any specific conceptual metaphor is necessarily universal. We can differentiate between primary metaphors, grounded in universal human experiences, and culturally specific metaphors which can be highly complex, drawing on primary metaphors and/or other culturally specific ones (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 2003: 257).² For instance, the cognitive metaphor AFFECTION IS WARMTH can be traced back to the bodily experience of the heat perceived when involved in the display of affection implied in being held (cf. Lakoff/Johnson 2003: 255). As opposed to such a metaphorical source, the conceptualization of the divine in terms of *father* is specific e.g. to the occidental patriarchal tradition, as testified by alternatives such as extant female conceptualizations of the divine in Sisterhood-of-Avalon-paganism. What does appear to be universal is the indispensability of metaphor in such an abstract domain as that of the divine: it is a concept, just like that of love or time – or gender –, which we can hardly speak about except through the use of metaphor. The specific metaphor we use, however, is culture-bound.

This means that metaphors are not, as the classical rhetorical view will have it, based on similarity of any factual kind. If this were the case, there would hardly be such a wide variety in the choice of source domain for one and the same target. Rather, metaphors are based “on cross-domain correlations in our experience, which give rise to [...] *perceived* similarities between the two

¹ It should be noted that *cognitive* is here used in a broad sense, referring to patterns of thought involving the body, emotion, cognition, actions and cultural background knowledge (cf. Schmitt 2017: 38).

² On the issue of universality vs. cultural specificity of metaphors, see esp. Kövecses (2005).

domains within the metaphors” (Lakoff/Johnson 2003: 245, my emphasis).³ The conceptual metaphor itself, therefore, is not a factual entity to be discovered, but an abstract pattern gleaned from the linguistic expressions at hand; the fruit of a hermeneutic reconstruction (cf. Schmitt 2017: 89-94).⁴

This hermeneutic reconstruction is here to be applied to the conceptualization of WOMAN. Studies on gendered metaphors, i.e. metaphors generally attributed to a gender (cf. Hegstrom/McCarl-Nielsen 2002: 220) specifically focussing on women, are not new to cognitive linguistics. Variations of the conceptual metaphor WOMEN ARE FOOD have been studied for English (cf. Hines 1999b; Hegstrom/McCarl-Nielsen 2002; Kövecses 2006) and Spanish (cf. Gutiérrez-Rivas 2011). It has also been shown that women are conceptualized as things and as animals in English (cf. Nilsen 1996; Hines 1999a; Kövecses 2006; López Rodríguez 2009) and the animal metaphor is attested for French and Italian, too (cf. Baider/Gesuato 2003). Despite these findings, the subject is still oddly understudied, especially since the argument has been made that “gendered metaphorical expressions actually reproduce the patriarchal culture” (Montashery 2013: 107). With this in mind, I turn to proverbs, a text genre that feeds both off metaphoricality and historical replication and which has not, to my knowledge, been analysed from the perspective of gender construction, especially in the languages I focus on here.⁵

The cognitive metaphor approach, on the other hand, has already been applied to the study of proverbs – explicitly by Gibbs/Beitel (2003), who focus proverb understanding, and implicitly by Lakoff/Turner (1989). The latter embed proverb analysis in the broader frame of CMT, suggesting that proverb

³ This in turn depends on a philosophical premise of CMT which rejects the objectivist paradigm (see Lakoff 1987).

⁴ This useful theoretical clarification is offered as a means of avoiding what Schmitt calls the scientism fallacy of CMT. In fact, (metaphorical) expressions used by Lakoff & Johnson in relation to conceptual metaphors, such as *discover*, are infelicitous in that they imply the finding of a truth in an objectivist sense. However, it is important to stress that the American authors themselves do not ascribe to such a *Weltanschauung*, as pointed out above (see footnote 2).

⁵ Kerschen (1998) and Storm (1992) have authored reference works of American English and Japanese proverbs about women respectively. While their categorizations of the indexed proverbs relate to the findings of the present paper, there is much to be gained from applying the cognitive perspective.

metaphors are based, among other things, on the great-chain-of-being-system, i.e. the hierarchical order implicitly shared in Western societies that places humans at the top and natural physical things at the bottom (cf. Lakoff/Turner 1989: 170–171). Despite incidentally mentioning internal categorizations of the human level of the system (cf. Lakoff/Turner 1989: 209), the elaboration of this chain of power strikingly misses a ring: WOMAN. Using the so-called generic masculine in reference to humans, Lakoff/Turner's account indeed fails to really focus on the place reserved to WOMAN in the chain by proverb metaphors, which is clearly lower than that attributed to MAN.⁶ What is more, none of these studies focus on the relevance of the diachronic dimension in the metaphoricity of proverbs.

2. Metaphoricity of Proverbs and Diachronic Relevance

Paremiology offers only little help in addressing our questions. Over fifty definitions of *proverb* were counted by Mieder back in 1985, and there have been many other characterisations since.⁷ The more recent ones highlight fixedness (Gibbs/Beitel 2003: 111–112; Mieder 2007; Harnisch 2003: 164; Hallik 2007: 35; Steyer 2012a: 311) and syntactic independence (Gibbs/Beitel 2003: 111–112; Harnisch 2003: 64; Steyer 2012a: 311), attributing to proverbs a generally shared deontic content with a directive force (Gibbs/Beitel 2003: 111–112; Harnisch 2003: 164; Mieder 2007) and/or an epistemic content (Gibbs/Beitel 2003: 111–112; Harnisch 2003: 164) with a descriptive, if not explanatory force in a given situation.⁸ At the core of most paremiological definitions and characterizations, whether they be structural-semantic,

⁶ In American English proverbs as well as in Romance ones, as even a cursory glance at Kerschen's collection (1998) easily shows.

⁷ While giving necessary and sufficient conditions for the definition of *proverb* has proven difficult, the evolution of the term at least can easily be retraced: starting out from the Latin *proverbium*, literally "fore-word", the term makes its way into modern European languages (Engl. *proverb*, Frz. *proverbe*, Ital. *proverbio*, Rus. *pogovoka*) thanks to Bible translations and especially via the Old French form *proverbe* (cf. Riedel 2014: 11).

⁸ Recognizing that no single constellation of these traits is necessary and sufficient in defining a proverb, one can side with Harnish (2003) and Gibbs/Beitel (2003), who instead characterize proverbs using the notion of *prototype*. This approach is useful for its flexibility, however their account highlights traits such as literarity and formal figures of speech typical of literary genres, which are arguably not the most central to defining proverbs *per se*.

functional-pragmatic or cognitive, there is an unfortunate lack of a focus on proverb metaphoricity. This is all the more conspicuous since the association of metaphor and proverb dates back at least to Aristotle (Rhet. III, 11, 1413a, 17), who understands proverbs as *meta-phors*, i.e. transfers of one species onto another. In relatively recent years, some scholars have contemplated proverb metaphoricity as only contingent (Röhrich 2000; Steyer 2012b: 7), albeit typical (Gibbs/Beitel 2003: 116; Lapucci 2006: XXVII). Even the cognitivist paremiologist Honeck (1997) views metaphor as only one among many tropes occurring in proverbs; with his distinction between similes and metaphors, he reveals a quite traditional grasp of the concept. Seitel (1981) and Geary (2012) do take a more radical approach, but still remain within the boundaries of classical metaphor view.

Of course, from a cognitive linguistics perspective, it could be argued that it is almost redundant to state the metaphoricity of proverbs, given the omnipresence of metaphor in discourse. To put it in Gibbs/Beitel's words, proverbs' "communicative functions rest on the primacy of metaphor in the ways people ordinarily think" (2003: 152). Thus, we could simply take proverbs as a text genre – as any other text genre – to study conceptual metaphors. This might indeed be true. However, we should not fail to consider the specificity of the interaction between conceptual metaphor and proverb – thus, of the importance of studying the conceptual metaphors displayed by proverbs for a given target domain. For what is all but banal is the semantic crystallisation of the metaphors we can ferret out from this text genre – and the cultural insights this allows.

The cultural relevance of proverbs *per se* need hardly be argued. They are repositories of "attitudes or worldview (mentality) of various social classes at different periods" (Mieder 2007: 401), loaded as they are with cultural symbology (cf. Steyer 2012b: 8). But I believe their key role in identifying metaphors specific to a culture has not been stressed enough so far. In fact, the linguistic crystallisation of an established folk belief relying on a metaphor in the cognitive sense must draw on a diachronically recurrent metaphor, i.e. on a conceptual metaphor. In other words, if a metaphor can be obtained from a fixed text like that of a proverb, that is probably good *prima facie* evidence that it is well represented among a given linguistic and cultural community, and has probably dressed itself in a variety of linguistic garments in everyday

language. In this sense, the study of proverbs holds not only a general historic and social interest (cf. Bierbach 1995: 269) but is also of the utmost importance for the diachrony of a given concept. Even an author like Gibbs, who has worked extensively, from a cognitive-psychological perspective, on metaphors, and specifically on proverb metaphoricity (Gibbs/Beitel 2003), acknowledging as early as two decades ago the “culturally embodied nature of what is cognitive” (Gibbs 1999: 162), has hardly dealt with this point. I thus suggest viewing the proverbial text as a goldmine of conceptual metaphors ingrained in a specific discourse tradition, understood as the discourse regularities producing speech act patterns and text genres that are grounded in a historic dimension (cf. Koch 1997: 46). Proverbs, in other words, serve as a kind of funnel for what can be called *cultural conceptual metaphors* thanks to the metaphoricity of thought and language – and, thus, of the proverb itself – on the one hand, and to their diachronic crystallisation on the other hand (see Fig. 1).

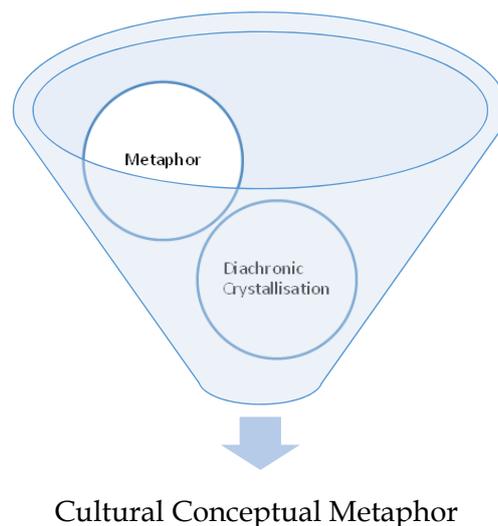


Fig. 1: Paremiological Funnel for Cultural Conceptual Metaphors

If this is the case, then, embracing a contrastive perspective in the linguistic study of proverb metaphors should prove particularly revealing and rewarding in at least two respects. The most obvious one is certainly the comparison of cultural conceptual metaphors. But there is also something else, perhaps something more, to be gained. By reconstructing and comparing the cultural conceptual metaphors used for a target in different languages, we can begin to trace the borders of their discourse tradition. For a discourse tradition

can coincide with, but is by no means bound to the extension of an idiom (cf. Koch 1997: 46).

3. Studying Gendered Metaphors in Italian and French Proverbs

Hardly any other concept has been the object of such prolific proverb coining as WOMAN (cf. Lapucci 2006: 343).⁹ There are 280 Italian proverbs on WOMAN in Lapucci's dictionary alone, which collects proverbs of common usage in Italian (cf. Lapucci 2006: XXV). Similarly, 168 French proverbs on WOMAN could be gleaned from multiple French paremiographic collections (Pineaux 1967; Dournon 1986; Montreynaud et al. 2002). These will be the subject of my analysis in what follows. Specifically, I analyse the metaphors whose target domain is that of WOMAN, i.e. sayings that describe or comment on women or instruct (men) about the norm of conduct around women.¹⁰

Having established the target domain WOMAN and the proverb corpus, the core of the work lies in the systematic analysis of a group of examples. In Schmitt's refined bottom-up methodology for the analysis of conceptual metaphor (cf. 2017: 456–528),¹¹ this first involves the identification of

⁹ According to Contini (1960: 521), the anonymous paremiographic work *Proverbia quae dicuntur super natura feminarum* is the first misogynistic text in Vulgar Italian, in turn inspired by a French one. Proverb production on women in these languages must then be dated back to well before the 12th century. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that “there is not a similar set of sayings about men, since everything is observed from their point of view” (Kerschen 1998: 6).

¹⁰ Any proverb about women employing a female entity as a source domain or displaying only conceptual metaphors unrelated to women is not taken into consideration.

¹¹ Developed in and for social sciences, Schmitt's qualitative metaphor analysis is, to my knowledge, the one attempt to provide a systematic, repeatable bottom-up method based on CMT. Not only does this qualitative metaphor analysis make up for CMT's lack of explicit method, but it also provides the basis for incrementing bottom-up studies, which are still not all too common in the literature. CMT, in fact, was not born from the empirical study of natural language corpora, but from introspection and the linguist's and speaker's intuition. The operationalization of Schmitt's method comprises the following steps relevant for a linguistic study: identification of target domain, unsystematic, broad-based collection of background metaphors and self-analysis, sampling (i.e. corpus definition), systematic analysis of a sub-group, heuristic interpretation (see Schmitt 2017: 458–518). A word should perhaps be spent on the second, less obvious step, the collection of background metaphors. Schmitt explains: „Um die kulturell übliche Metaphorisierung eines Themas zu erfassen, wird ein Horizont von möglichen Metaphernfeldern zu den Zielbereichen aus heterogenen Materialien gesammelt“ (2017: 457). This in principle poses a circularity problem: if the

metaphorical expressions, including what classical rhetoric views as similes, through deconstructive segmentation of the texts. Secondly, the reconstruction of conceptual metaphors, i.e. the synthesis of collective metaphorical models must be carried out. These two sub-steps are clearly the crucial ones from a linguistic point of view. Accordingly, we can find some criteria for how this analysis should be carried out in the linguistic literature, too. For instance, Hines (cf. 1999b: 149), who analyses *WOMEN AS DESSERT* in the CMT frame, asks that a metaphorical expression have a nonmetaphorical, referential sense, to be considered central to a conceptual metaphor. However, the need for a metaphorical expression to be referential seems altogether questionable. If I say *Women have nine lives*, I am neither denoting cats nor am I availing myself of the cat concept to directly designate another extralinguistic entity; but there still is an underlying conceptual metaphor that allows us to characterise *WOMAN* by projecting a trait attributed to cats onto them. According to Lakoff/Johnson (cf. 2003 [1980]: 36–37) the centrality of the referential function is, in fact, the very thing that distinguishes metonymy from metaphor.¹²

The reconstruction of conceptual metaphors, comprising decisions about the broadness of conceptual metaphor formulation, is a heuristic process that resists precise operationalization – if we are not to entirely clip the wings of the humanities. The material at hand, filtered through the analyst's eyes, is intended to lead to a meaningful categorisation and formulation of the proverb metaphors. What seems to be shared and accepted in the literature is that a claim that something is a conceptual metaphor ought to be grounded on

ambition of a high degree of method controlling is upheld for this step, the research risks to be stranded in a never ending, as well as impossible, game. Anything else, i.e. anything realistic, is of course inaccurate. The qualification of 'unsystematic' likely accounts for this necessary methodological compromise without renouncing the revenue offered by embedding the focused corpus in a broader setting, honouring the intertextual and cultural web in which it is bound. Nonetheless, it is utopian to carry out this step for each and every single paper on a target domain. The very intertextuality it entails and on which it builds, however, makes it possible to equate such reconstruction of a comparative background with a reference to the extant state of the art. At the same time, each further study can and should be conceived as a tile in broadening the comparative base of metaphors for a given concept for further analyses. This is all the more true of the present paper on gendered metaphors in proverbs, for the diachronic nature of the genre I have already dwelled upon.

¹² They both share the function of enabling understanding, but metonymy has a primary referential function, which metaphor does not necessarily share.

recurrent metaphorical expressions. Given that proverbs occur multiply by definition, this hardly poses an issue for our present purposes. Still, I shall focus the exposition on the metaphors more represented in proverbs. I will also assess the similarities and differences between the two set of proverbs – corresponding to Schmitt’s heuristic interpretation step.

4. Metaphorical Patterns about WOMAN in Italian and French Proverbs

Though the distribution of metaphoric expressions is different in Italian and French proverbs, the most common ones in both languages allow the formulation of two superordinate conceptual metaphors: WOMAN ARE SUPERHUMAN and WOMAN ARE PROPERTY, with a few further subcategories. The unidirectionality and metaphoricity of these mappings is given by the fact that “one domain of knowledge is used to structure another, but not the reverse” (cf. Gibbs/Beitel 2003: 116). Even when the traits selected from the source domain are themselves the result of metaphorical personification, they are not drawn from a gendered source like the target domain they are used to structure. Before taking a closer look at them, a few lines should be spent on the linguistic means employed to instantiate these metaphors.

The correspondences between the source domains and the target domain of WOMAN that make out the conceptual metaphors are established by associating the latter with a hyponym of the source domain. It is perhaps the popular origin of the text genre that accounts for the simplicity of the way this cognitive association is carried out. My findings in fact contradict Geary’s observation (2012: 194) according to which “proverbs are all source and no target”, as the linking mostly takes place rather explicitly by direct identification of two noun phrases via copula (1)-(2) or through the metaphoric markers *come* and *comme*, i.e. the preposition introducing the second comparison element in an equality comparative (3)-(4). At times, the identification is aided by parallelism, which sheds light on (perceived) analogies between concepts or in elliptic predications where the copula or the prepositional marker are omitted, but can easily be added (5)-(7).

- (1) La donna è l’angelo della casa.
- (2) Femmes *sont* à l’église saintes, ès rues anges, à la maison diablasses.

- (3) La donna cambia *come* la luna.
- (4) Les femmes sont *comme* les omelettes, elles ne sont jamais assez battues.
- (5) Donna iraconda [*è un*] mare senza sponda.
- (6) Foi de femme [*est*] plume sur l'eau.
- (7) Belle femme [*est*] mauvaise tête [*comme*] bonne mule [*est*] mauvaise bête.

In (4) the trait perceived as common of the two associated domains is made explicit: women, just as omelette eggs, need a good beating according to popular wisdom. This is an extremely common strategy in proverbs, often used when source and target domain are not explicitly equated, but rather associated through accumulation. This is achieved linguistically either through enumeration of phrases (9, 11) or through a single phrasal pair forming a dual concept (8, 10). Taking the entity paired with WOMAN as metonymically standing for the quality it is considered to hold, the pair can really be treated as a hendiadys, which amounts to recognising the conceptual metaphor at play, with the source acting as a qualifier of the target (e.g. *donne bestiali* 'beastly women' instead of *donne e cavalli* 'women and horses'). What follows can either be the predication of a trait perceived as common of the two domains or the enunciation of the norm of conduct perceived as advisable with both these entities, presupposing a trait perceived as common, which is to be inferred, e.g. imperfection (8) or unreliability (9-11).

- (8) Des femmes et des chevaux il n'y en a point sans défauts.
- (9) Temps, ciel pommelé *et* femme fardée *ne sont pas de longue durée*.
- (10) Il tempo e le donne hanno sempre fatto come gli pare.
- (11) Donna, vento e ventura *presto si mutano*.

A common way of creating the association between target and source domain, especially in Italian proverbs, is making the target the winner of an explicit or implicit competitive comparison. This entails that WOMAN not only shares the qualities of the entity with which she is set in a competitive relation but also holds them in a particularly strong way. The hyperbole thus brings about an identification. This pattern is most often displayed associating WOMAN with DEVIL, with the apparent rivalry between the two abstract entities being conveyed by morphosyntactic or lexical comparative.

- (12) Le donne [la *donna*] ne sanno [ne sa] *una più del diavolo*.
- (13) La donna piccola è *più furba di due diavoli*.
- (14) La donna *la fece anche al Diavolo*.